DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 102 202 95 TM 004 260

AUTHOR	Aldrich, Ruth Anne
TITLE	Children's Perception of Choice and Contribution to Environment.
INSTITUTION	Minneapolis Public Schools, Minn. Southeast Alternatives Program.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Jun 74
NOTE	23p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	Child Responsibility; Child Role; *Elementary School Students; Interviews; *Open Education; *Role Perception; *School Activities; *School Environment
IDENTIFIERS	Marcy Open School; Minneapolis Public Schools; *Southeast Alternatives

ABSTRACT

Southeast Alternatives, the name given to the Minneapolis Public Schools' Experimental School Project, a plan testing comprehensive change in education, was initiated in 1971 with the intent to bridge the gap from research and experimentation to practice. Marcy Open School, one of the alternative elementary schools, offers flexible curriculum, scheduling and age grouping, with emphasis on helping children to learn to think and to make independent judgments. As part of a goal evaluation for the 1973-74 school year, a children's interview was designed and divided into two sections, (1) children's perceptions of choices of activities available to them during a school day, and (2) children's perceptions of the contributions of themselves, of adults, and of peers to the school environment. The same questions were asked of six of the ten classroom teachers to reveal their perceptions of the day. Results of the interview are presented in diagram form and confirm that children at Marcy School understand that they have many possible choices during the day, and that they, their teachers, and peer group, contribute to the academic and social setting of the school. (RC)

ED102202

Minneapolis Public Schools
Southeast Alternatives Internal Evaluation Team
Tuttle School-Room 207
1042 18th Avenue SE
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55414
331-6257

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTION OF CHOICE

AND

CONTRIBUTION TO ENVIRONMENT

Marcy Open School
June, 1974

Written by Ruth Anne Aldrich, Evaluator

Assistance in interview design by Bill Stockton,
Marcy parent, and Nancy Miller, University
of North Dakota

Assistance in data collection by Sherrill Hooker,
Evaluator, Gail Welsh, Evaluator, Cindy Hoppe,
Evaluator.

Clerical: Liz Pilman

This is a Southeast Alternatives Level I evaluation report, prepared as part of the Marcy Open School evaluation effort. Contact Ruth Anne Aldrich, evaluator, for further information.

TM004 260

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

Background Information on Southeast Alternatives.................. 1

Introduction.. 1

Children's Perception of Choices.................................... 2

Contribution to Environment...13

Significance of Interview Responses.................................15

Conclusions...17

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON SOUTHEAST ALTERNATIVES

December, 1973

The Experimental Schools Program (ESP), a plan testing comprehensive change in education, was initiated in 1971 with the intent to bridge the gap from research and experimentation to practice.

The experimental schools concept became a reality when Congress appropriated $12 million for the fiscal year 1971 following President Nixon's message on education reform, March 3, 1970. The program was first sponsored by the United States Office of Education and now is directed by the National Institute of Education (NIE).

The Minneapolis Public School District was one of eight school districts throughout the nation that received $10,000 planning grants to prepare a proposal for a single comprehensive K-12 project. In May, 1971 three of the eight districts, Minneapolis Public Schools, Berkeley Unified School District of Berkeley, California and Franklin Pierce School District of Tacoma, Washington, were selected as experimental school sites. There are 18 experimental school sites as of 1973.

Southeast Alternatives, the name given to the Minneapolis Public Schools' Experimental School Project, was funded for five years. On June 1, 1971, a 27-month operation grant of $[illegible] was made to the school district. A final 33-month contract for $[illegible] was approved by the National Institute of Education (NIE) on May 23, 1973.

Major factors in the selection of southeast Minneapolis as the site for the Minneapolis program were its commitment to a comprehensive proposal, past record of responsible innovation, and plan for providing parent choice of alternative schools. The 2,500 K-12 students in the project include a racially and economically diverse urban population. Southeast Minneapolis, bounded by factories, flour mills, freeways, multiple dwellings, residential neighborhoods, [illegible] area and a [illegible], also houses the main campus of the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. Single family homes, low income apartments and expensive condominiums are all located in the area. This mixture of ages, occupations, interests, and life styles suggests a diversity of views about the nature of public education which the five SEA alternative schools of parent choice reflect.

The central theme of Southeast Alternatives is to provide comprehensive change in the educational environment and programs for the better education of children. The change is accomplished by offering choices to students, teachers, and parents in the types of educational programs available, involving students, faculty and parents in educational decision-making processes and decentralizing the administrative structure of the school district to local schools.

At the elementary level four alternative school programs are offered:

The Contemporary School at Tuttle utilizes the graded, primarily self-contained classroom structure. Basic skills of mathematics and language are developed through an individualized, multi-level, multi-media approach. Students flow between their base rooms and a variety of learning centers to participate in learning activities throughout the entire school day.

The Continuous Progress primary at Pratt and the Continuous Progress intermediate at Motley allow each child to advance at his own pace without regard to grade level. Mornings are highly structured with language arts, math and social studies. Afternoons are used for two week interest groups designed and implemented by students, faculty and staff, parents and volunteers.

The Open School at Marcy utilizes flexible curriculum, scheduling and age grouping, with emphasis on helping children to learn to think, and to learn to make independent judgments.

The Free School (K-12) has curriculum flexibility allowing the student [illegible] with emphasis on [illegible] and in enhancing students' skills, knowledge and [illegible] in an environment of rapid, [illegible] change. The Free School is particularly committed to [illegible] in today's society.

At the secondary level the Free School program option is available as well as the flexible Marshall-University High School array of courses and activities. At Marshall-University High School each student with his parents' counsel designs his or her educational program within a trimester system of twelve-week courses. In addition to single discipline courses there are multi-disciplinary courses, independent study opportunities, and a variety of off-campus learning programs in the community.

The transitional program for grades 7-8 at Marshall-University High School has been evolved to offer choices to students coming from the elementary options. An expanded open classroom and graded classes are available as well as S.L.E., the Selected Learning Environment for students with special needs. Teachers work in teams to offer a flexible program to meet the needs of students in the transitional years.

A Teacher Center has been established to provide teachers with an opportunity to exchange information and innovative thinking as well as to provide an avenue for preservice experiences. An Executive Committee made up of teachers from the schools receives proposals and acts on them, thus providing a direct role for teachers in the staff development activities. The University of Minnesota and Minneapolis Public Schools jointly operate the Teacher Center which was first initiated with federal SEA funds.

Evaluation of the SEA project is both internal and external. The Level I internal evaluation team provides continuing responsive formative evaluation to program decision-makers (including parents, administrators, faculty, staff and students.

The level of evaluation [illegible] is [illegible] by the [illegible]. This [illegible] is [illegible] as the [illegible] Evaluation Plan [illegible] and [illegible]. The purpose of [illegible] evaluation is to [illegible] of a [illegible] and [illegible] in the process of designing, implementing or [illegible] programs in [illegible] education.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

1. [illegible]
2. [illegible]
3. [illegible]

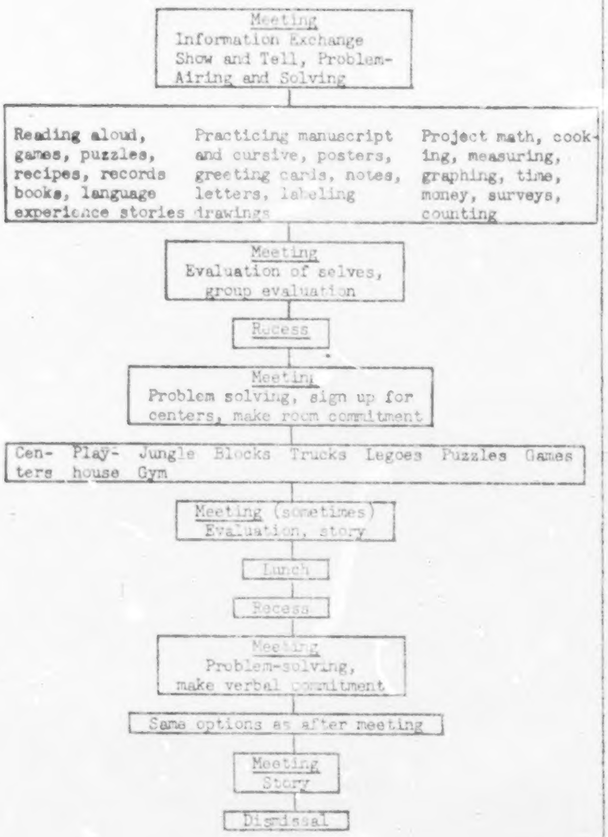
[illegible]

[illegible]

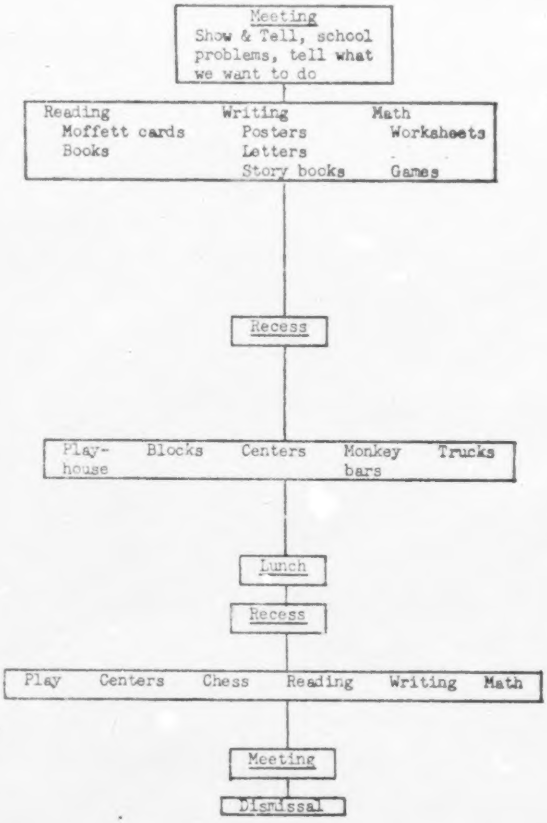
1. [illegible]
2. [illegible]
3. [illegible]

PRIMARY ROOM D

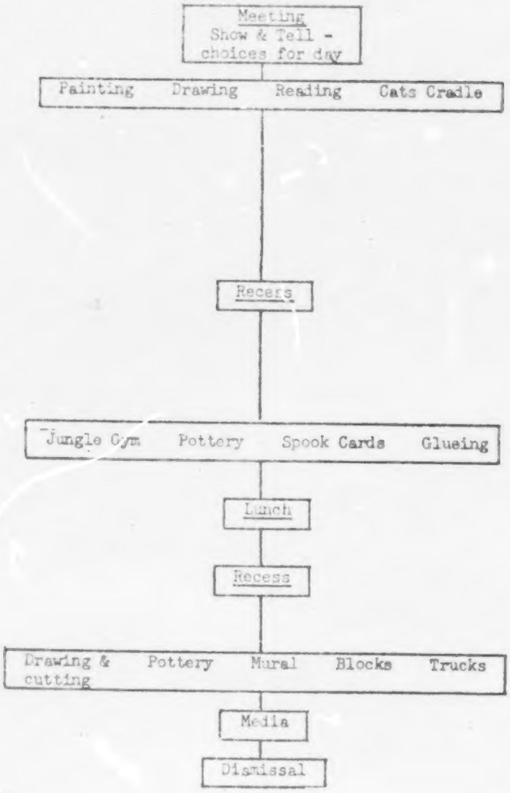
TEACHER'S PERCEPTION OF DAY


Meeting
Information Exchange
Show and Tell, Problem-Airing and Solving
Reading aloud, games, puzzles, recipes, records books, language experience stories
Practicing manuscript and cursive, posters, greeting cards, notes, letters, labeling drawings
Project math, cooking, measuring, graphing, time, money, surveys, counting
Meeting
Evaluation of selves, group evaluation
Recess
Meeting
Problem solving, sign up for centers, make room commitment
Centers
Playhouse
Jungle Gym
Blocks
Trucks
Legoes
Puzzles
Games
Meeting (sometimes)
Evaluation, story
Lunch
Recess
Meeting
Problem-solving, make verbal commitment
Same options as after meeting
Meeting
Story
Dismissal

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTION OF DAY
(5 children interviewed)



ACTIVITIES OF CHILDREN INTERVIEWED OBSERVED DURING ACTUAL DAY
(4 children observed - 1 absent)



PRIMARY ROOM E

TEACHER'S PERCEPTION OF DAY

Meeting
Attendance, announcements, introduce new projects, discuss feelings, song

4-5 options made available
social studies
art
science

do anything they want

Recess

Reading
Writing a story, reading a story, making comic strip, riddles, puzzles, writing a letter games, Moffett cards

Math
project math games

Writing
pictionary stories

Meeting
Talk about people, problems, communication, problem solving

Lunch

Recess

Meeting
Problems from a.m., feelings to air, helping one another

Repeat reading, writing, math options

Design
Symmetry
cuissinaire rods
social studies
people

creative dramatics

Dismissal

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTION OF DAY
(5 children interviewed)

Meeting
Attendance, plan for day, talk about problems, stories

Coloring Blocks Books Paint Trucks Math Music Cards Fingerweaving Games Gerbils Wacky Packages Clay Read "Anything we want"

Recess

Same options as before recess

Lunch

Recess

math
books

Reading
learn new words I don't know

Talk

Meeting
Teacher reads

Dismissal

ACTIVITIES OF CHILDREN INTERVIEWED OBSERVED DURING ACTUAL DAY
(5 children observed)

Meeting
Attendance, plans for day

Peg game
Writing contract
Drawing
Making chart
Toymaker
Writing Me books
Reading
book
word games

Recess

Drawing
Blocks
Reading
word game
Math
workbook
Batik

Lunch

Recess

Math
workbook
dice game
Peanut Butter and Jelly

Reading
arranging words with vowels

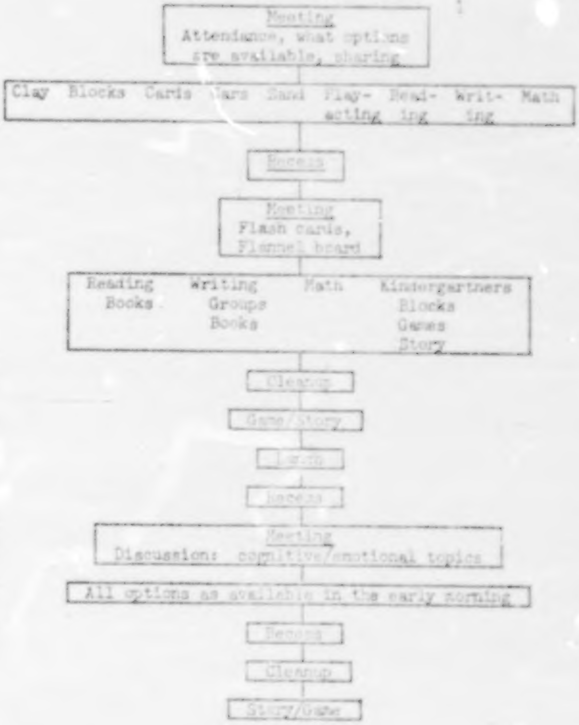
Clay
Random
Writing

Meeting
Teacher reads

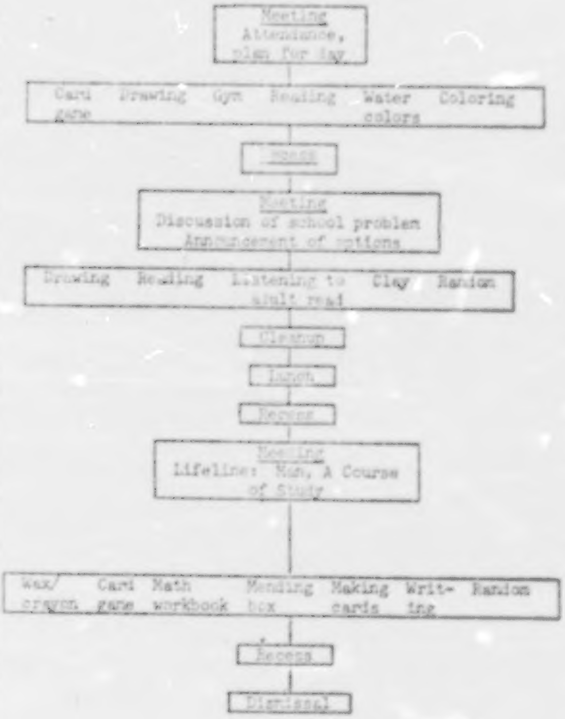
Dismissal

PRIMARY ROOM F

TEACHER'S PERCEPTION OF DAY

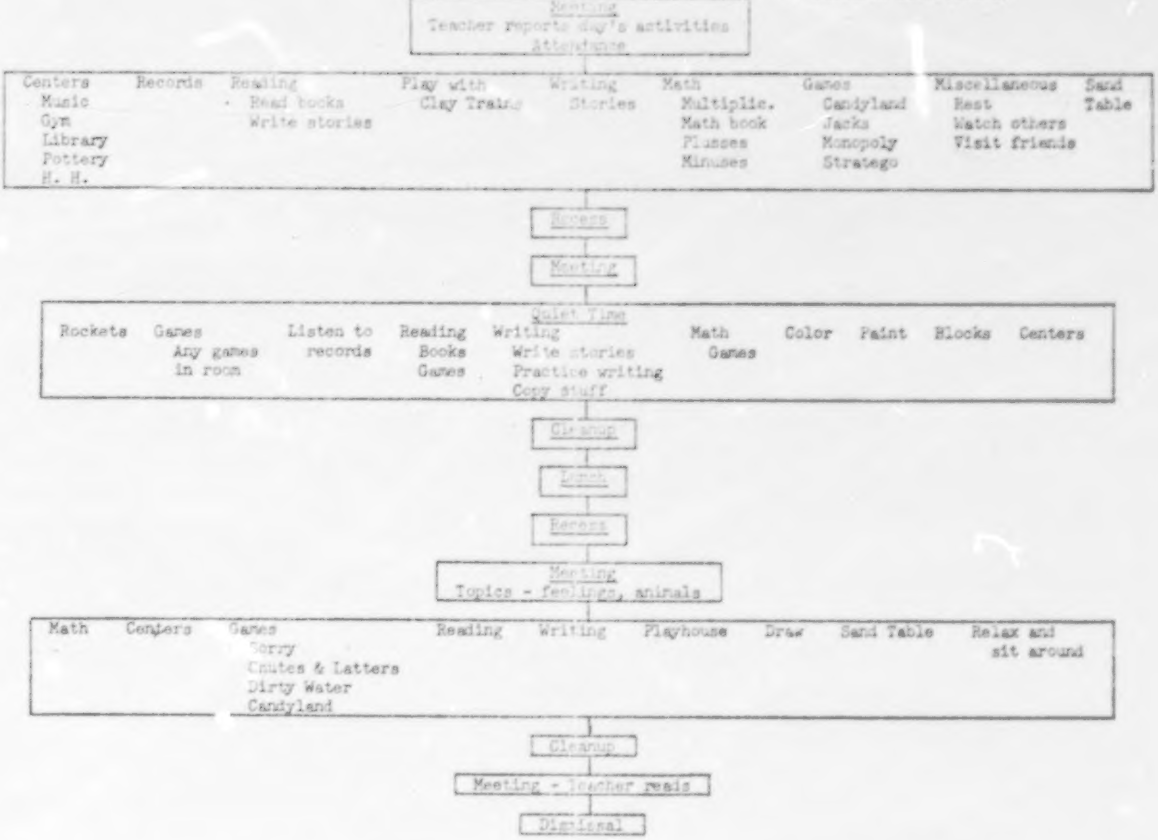


ACTIVITIES OF CHILDREN INTERVIEWED
OBSERVED DURING ACTUAL DAY
(5 children observed - 2 absent)



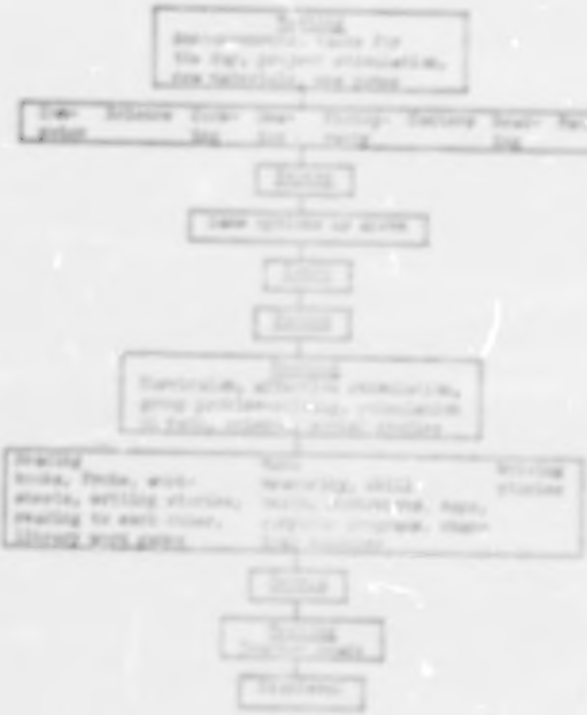
PRIMARY ROOM F

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTION OF DAY
(7 children interviewed)

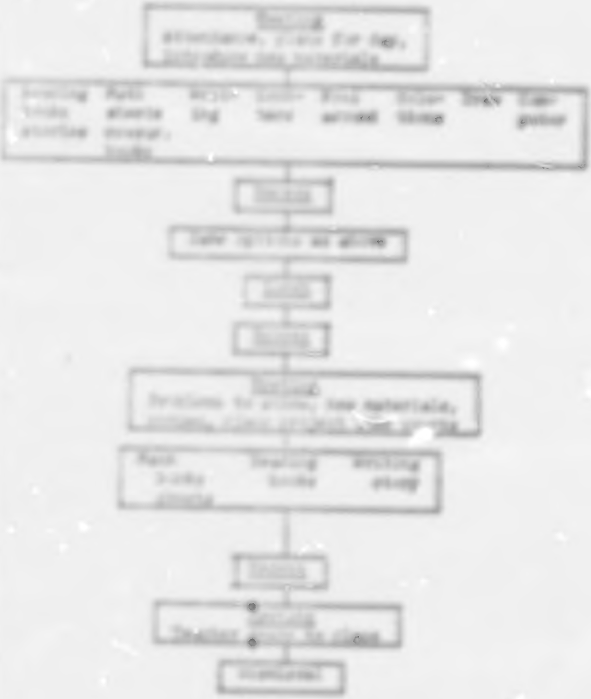


INTERMEDIATE UNIT A.

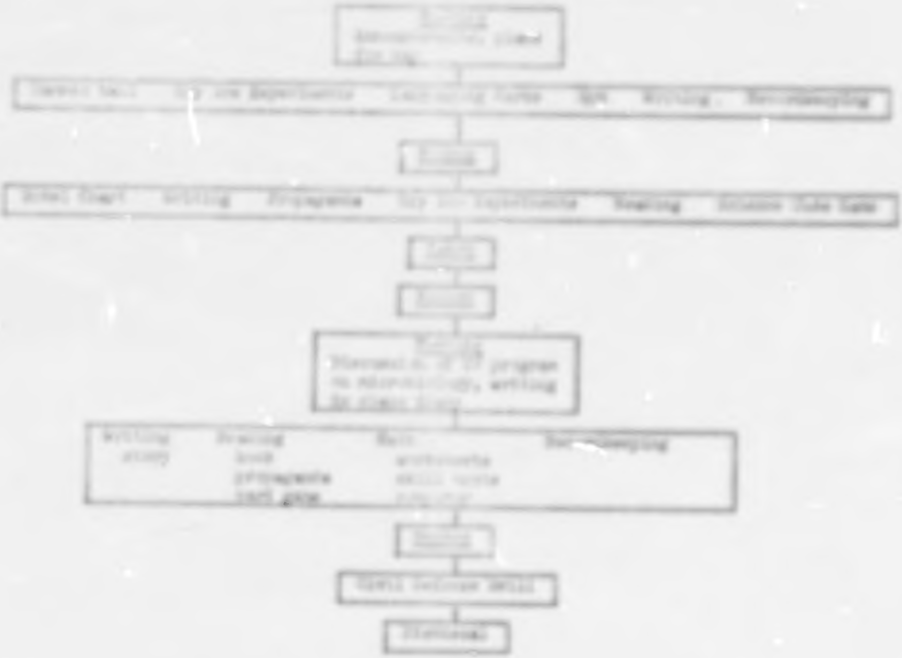
TEACHER'S PERCEPTION OF DAY



CHILDREN'S PERCEPTION OF DAY
(5 children interviewed)

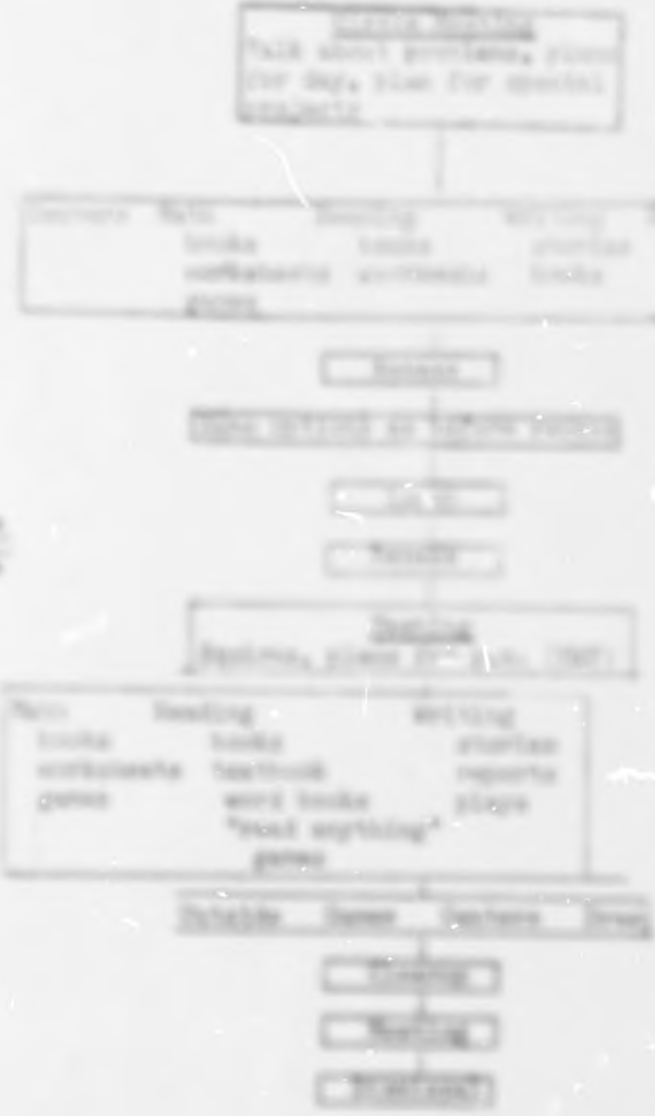


[illegible]
(5 children observed)

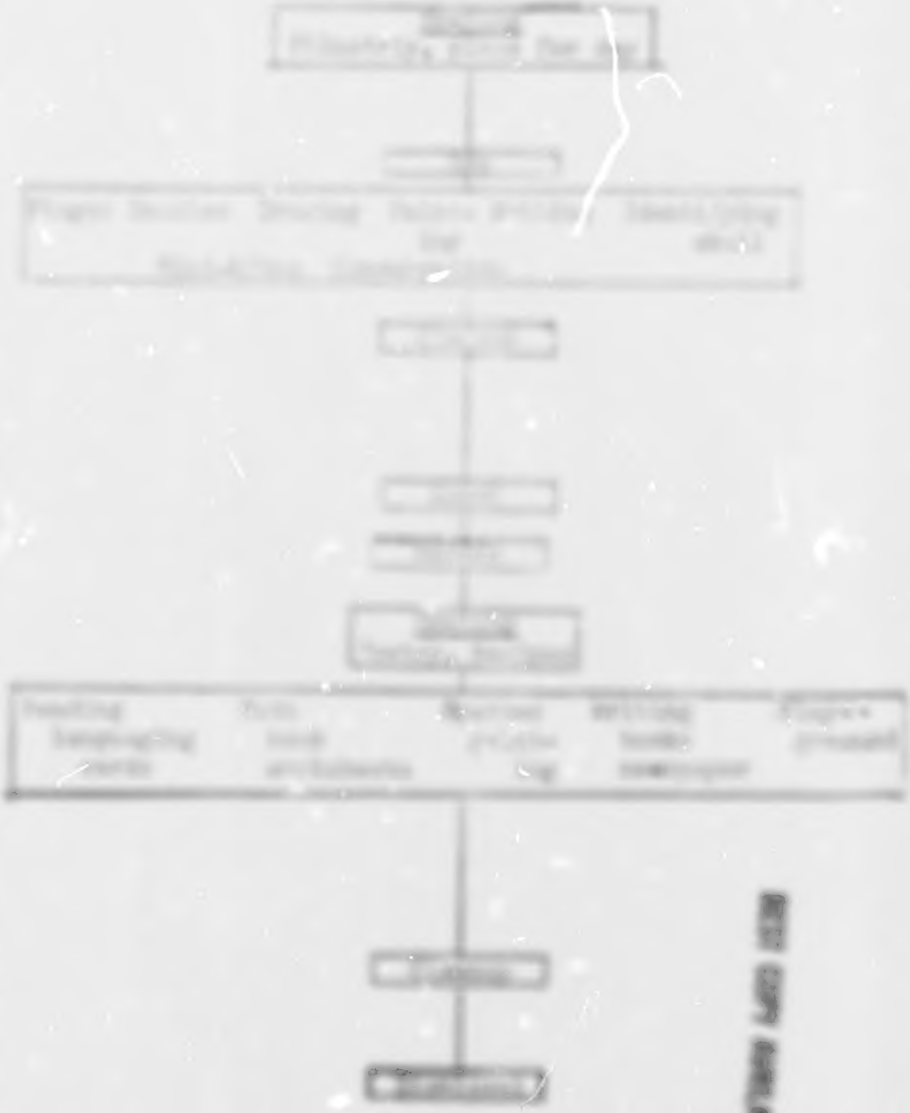


INTERMEDIATE ROOM C

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTION OF DAY
(7 children interviewed)

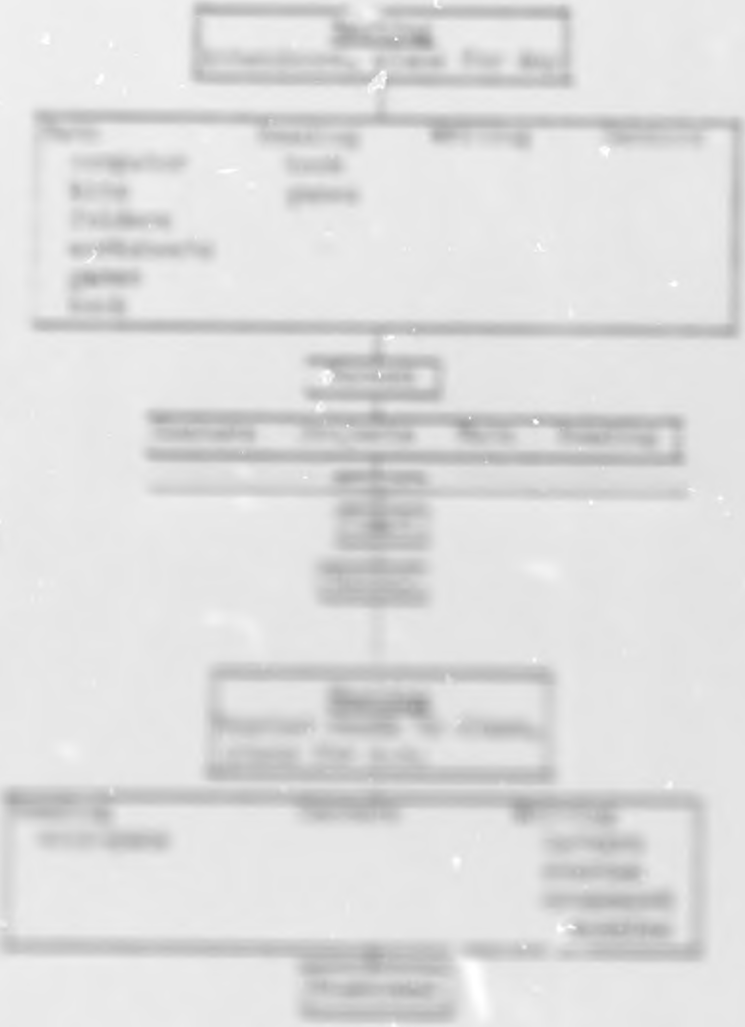

Class Meeting
Talk about problems, plans for day, plan for special projects
Centers Math Reading Writing Drawing
books books stories
worksheets workbooks books
games
Recess
Lunch
Recess
Reading
Math Reading Writing
books books stories
worksheets textbook reports
games word books plays
"read anything"
games
Outside Games Centers Draw
Cleanup
Meeting
Dismissal

ACTIVITIES OF CHILDREN INTERVIEWED
OBSERVED DURING ACTUAL DAY
(7 children observed)

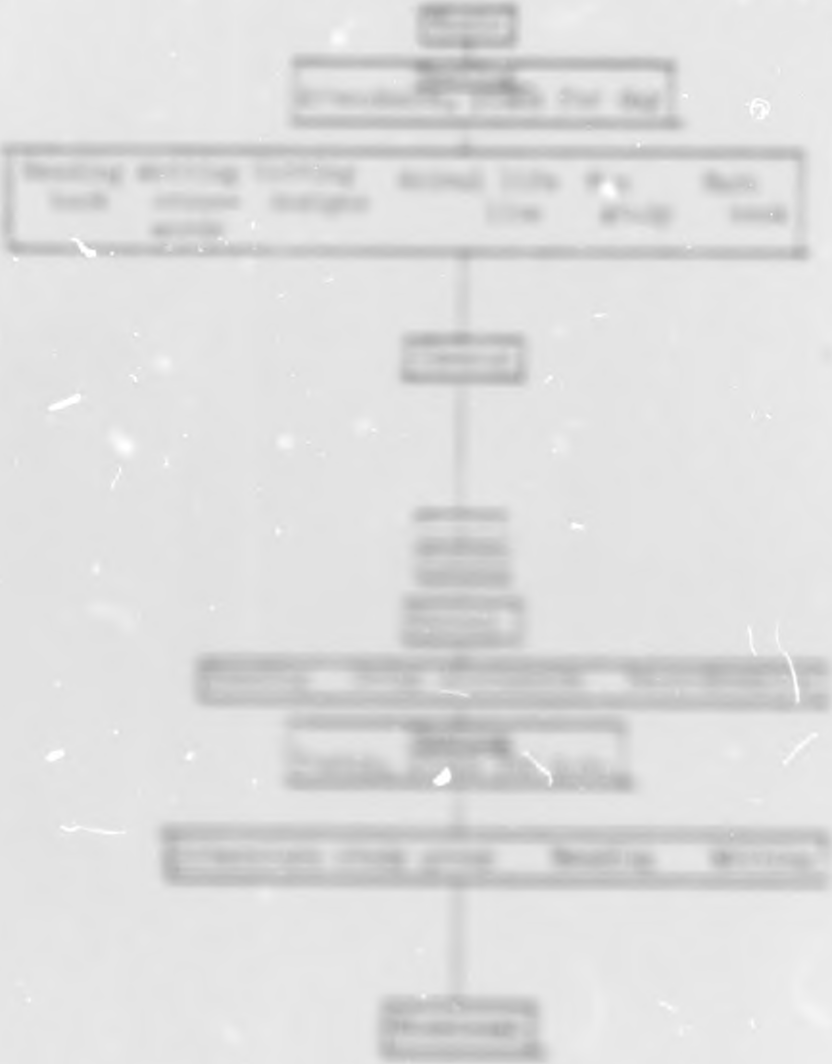

Meeting
Finger Puzzles Drawing Tables Writing Identifying
Day shell
Spelling Concentration
Reading Math Science Writing Figure
languaging book books
cards worksheets newspaper

[illegible]

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTION OF DAY
(5 children interviewed)



ACTIVITIES OF CHILDREN INTERVIEWED
OBSERVED DURING ACTUAL DAY
(5 children observed)



Contributions to Environment:

The second half of the interview related to the question of how children perceive the roles of various people in determining the environment of the school. The questions were analyzed to tap the child's perceptions of:

1. The contributions of the child to the classroom environment,
2. The contributions of adults (primarily the teacher) to the classroom environment, and
3. The contributions of peers to the classroom environment.

Many of the questions were developed by Nancy Wilson, Center for Teaching and Learning, University of North Dakota. Other questions which seemed relevant to the Perry project in particular were similarly generated and included in the interviews. The questions listed here were keyed respectively to 1, 2, and 3 above.

1. Think of something that you would like to learn or know more about.
   a. Could you do that in school? 1
   b. How would you go about it? 1
   c. How would the teacher (peers) help you? 2
2. Can you bring things into the classroom from home if you want to? 1
   a. Do you like to do that? 1
   b. What things have you brought in? 1
   c. What did you do with them? 1
      (or) What happened to them?
3. What does ______ (teacher's name) want you? 2
   a. What does she like to do best? 2
   b. What do you talk to ______ (teacher) about? 2
   c. Does ______ (teacher) talk to you about what you're doing? 2
4. Do you help other kids do things in the classroom? 1 and 3
   a. What do you help them do? 1 and 3
   b. How do you help them? (if not answered in a.)
5. What do you do if you need help with something? 3
   a. Do you ever ask another child to help you? 3
   b. Do you ever ask a grownup to help you? 2
6. Are there times when it's hard to work because of other children? 3
   a. What do the children do that makes it hard for you to work?
   b. Do they do this a lot? 3
   c. What do you do when they do this? 3
7. Do grownups in school ever do things to you that you don't like? 2
   a. What things?
   b. What do you do then? 2

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]				
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]				
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]